

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1 1. A method comprising:

- 2 a) encoding one or more ad properties of an ad and including them in a click  
3 URL;  
4 b) serving the ad together with the click URL;  
5 c) in response to a user selection of the ad,  
6 i) decoding the one or more encoded ad properties at an intermediate  
7 URL server, and  
8 ii) forwarding a content rendering facility of the user to an ad landing  
9 page.

1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the one or more ad properties include ad serving  
2 parameters.

1 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the one or more ad properties include one or more  
2 of: an identity of the ad; an identity of the advertiser; a time the ad was served; a time  
3 the ad was rendered; a rendering attribute of the ad; a position of the ad within a Web  
4 page; a price that the advertiser will be charged for the impression; a price that the  
5 advertiser will be charged for a click; a price that the advertiser will be charged for a  
6 conversion; an identity of the server that chose the ad; search conditions that generated  
7 the page with which the ad was rendered; a next intermediate URL; a final destination  
8 URL; an identity of the ad creative, a topic of the content with which the ad was served;  
9 a concept of content with which the ad was served; an identity of the content with which  
10 the ad was served; information about other ads that were rendered along with the ad; a  
11 geolocation to which the ad was served; and user profile information of the user to  
12 which the ad was served.

1 4. The method of claim 1 wherein the act of encoding one or more ad properties  
2 represents the encoded one or more ad properties with characters from a set of K  
3 characters, where K is no more than 72.

- 1 5. The method of claim 4 wherein K is 64.
- 1 6. The method of claim 4 wherein K is 32.
- 1 7. The method of claim 4 wherein K is 16.
- 1 8. The method 1 wherein the encoded one or more ad properties are represented with  
2 a set of K characters, and wherein the set of K characters excludes one or more  
3 characters selected from a set of characters consisting of "control" "space" "<" ">" and  
4 "%".
- 1 9. The method 1 wherein the encoded one or more ad properties are represented with  
2 a set of K characters, and wherein the set of K characters excludes one or more  
3 characters selected from a set of characters consisting of "{" "}" "|" "\" "^\ " "[" and "]".
- 1 10. A method comprising:  
2 a) representing each of one or more ad properties of an ad with a binary value;  
3 b) concatenating each of the one or more binary values to define a sequence of  
4 bits;  
5 c) encoding the sequence of bits into a sequence of characters, wherein each of  
6 the characters is selected from a set of K legal characters; and  
7 d) providing the sequence of characters in a click URL of the ad.
- 1 11. The method of claim 10 wherein the one or more ad properties include ad serving  
2 parameters.
- 1 12. The method of claim 10 wherein the one or more ad properties include one or more  
2 of: an identity of the ad; an identity of the advertiser; a time the ad was served; a time  
3 the ad was rendered; a rendering attribute of the ad; a position of the ad within a Web  
4 page; a price that the advertiser will be charged for the impression; a price that the  
5 advertiser will be charged for a click; a price that the advertiser will be charged for a

6 conversion; an identity of the server that chose the ad; search conditions that generated  
7 the page with which the ad was rendered; a next intermediate URL; a final destination  
8 URL; an identity of the ad creative, a topic of the content with which the ad was served;  
9 a concept associated with the content with which the ad was served; an identity of the  
10 content with which the ad was served; information about other ads that were rendered  
11 along with the ad; a geolocation to which the ad was served; and user profile  
12 information of the user to which the ad was served.

1 13. The method of claim 10 wherein K is no more than 72.

1 14. The method of claim 13 wherein K is 64.

1 15. The method of claim 13 wherein K is 32.

1 16. The method of claim 13 wherein K is 16.

1 17. The method 10 wherein the set of K characters excludes one or more characters  
2 selected from a set of characters consisting of "control" "space" "<" ">" and "%".

1 18. The method 10 wherein the set of K characters excludes one or more characters  
2 selected from a set of characters consisting of "{" "}" "|" "\" "^" "[" and "]".

1 19. The method of claim 10 wherein the act of encoding includes  
2 i) dividing a number defined by the sequence of bits by K to obtain a  
3 result and a remainder,  
4 ii) selecting one of the K legal characters using the remainder,  
5 iii) setting the number to the result, and  
6 iv) repeating acts (i)-(iii) until the result is less than K.

1 20. Apparatus comprising:

- 2 a) means for encoding one or more ad properties of an ad and including them in
- 3 a click URL;
- 4 b) means for serving the ad together with the click URL;
- 5 c) means, in response to a user selection of the ad, for
- 6 i) decoding the one or more encoded ad properties at an intermediate
- 7 URL server, and
- 8 ii) forwarding a content rendering facility of the user to an ad landing
- 9 page.

1 21. The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the one or more ad properties include ad  
2 serving parameters.

1 22. The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the one or more ad properties include one or  
2 more of: an identity of the ad; an identity of the advertiser; a time the ad was served; a  
3 time the ad was rendered; a rendering attribute of the ad; a position of the ad within a  
4 Web page; a price that the advertiser will be charged for the impression; a price that the  
5 advertiser will be charged for a click; a price that the advertiser will be charged for a  
6 conversion; an identity of the server that chose the ad; search conditions that generated  
7 the page with which the ad was rendered; a next intermediate URL; a final destination  
8 URL; an identity of the ad creative, a topic of the content with which the ad was served;  
9 a concept of content with which the ad was served; an identity of the content with which  
10 the ad was served; information about other ads that were rendered along with the ad; a  
11 geolocation to which the ad was served; and user profile information of the user to  
12 which the ad was served.

1 23. The apparatus of claim 20 wherein the means for encoding one or more ad  
2 properties represent the encoded one or more ad properties with characters from a set  
3 of K characters, where K is no more than 72.

- 1 24. The apparatus of claim 23 wherein K is 64.
- 1 25. The apparatus of claim 23 wherein K is 32.
- 1 26. The apparatus of claim 23 wherein K is 16.
- 1 27. The apparatus 20 wherein the encoded one or more ad properties are represented  
2 with a set of K characters, and wherein the set of K characters excludes one or more  
3 characters selected from a set of characters consisting of "control" "space" "<" ">" and  
4 "%".
- 1 28. The apparatus 20 wherein the encoded one or more ad properties are represented  
2 with a set of K characters, and wherein the set of K characters excludes one or more  
3 characters selected from a set of characters consisting of "{" "}" "|" "\" "^" "[" and "]".
- 1 29. Apparatus comprising:  
2 a) means for representing each of one or more ad properties of an ad with a  
3 binary value;  
4 b) means for concatenating each of the one or more binary values to define a  
5 sequence of bits;  
6 c) means for encoding the sequence of bits into a sequence of characters,  
7 wherein each of the characters is selected from a set of K legal characters; and  
8 d) means for providing the sequence of characters in a click URL of the ad.
- 1 30. The apparatus of claim 29 wherein the one or more ad properties include ad  
2 serving parameters.
- 1 31. The apparatus of claim 29 wherein the one or more ad properties include one or  
2 more of: an identity of the ad; an identity of the advertiser; a time the ad was served; a  
3 time the ad was rendered; a rendering attribute of the ad; a position of the ad within a  
4 Web page; a price that the advertiser will be charged for the impression; a price that the

5 advertiser will be charged for a click; a price that the advertiser will be charged for a  
6 conversion; an identity of the server that chose the ad; search conditions that generated  
7 the page with which the ad was rendered; a next intermediate URL; a final destination  
8 URL; an identity of the ad creative, a topic of the content with which the ad was served;  
9 a concept associated with the content with which the ad was served; an identity of the  
10 content with which the ad was served; information about other ads that were rendered  
11 along with the ad; a geolocation to which the ad was served; and user profile  
12 information of the user to which the ad was served.

1 32. The apparatus of claim 29 wherein K is no more than 72.

1 33. The apparatus of claim 32 wherein K is 64.

1 34. The apparatus of claim 32 wherein K is 32.

1 35. The apparatus of claim 32 wherein K is 16.

1 36. The apparatus 29 wherein the set of K characters excludes one or more characters  
2 selected from a set of characters consisting of "control" "space" "<" ">" and "%".

1 37. The apparatus 29 wherein the set of K characters excludes one or more characters  
2 selected from a set of characters consisting of "{" "}" "|" "\" "^" "[" and "]".

1 38. The apparatus of claim 29 wherein the means for encoding includes  
2 i) means for dividing a number defined by the sequence of bits by K to  
3 obtain a result and a remainder,  
4 ii) means for selecting one of the K legal characters using the remainder,  
5 iii) means for setting the number to the result, and  
6 iv) means for repeating acts (i)-(iii) until the result is less than K.